

by Bob Saydlowski, Jr.

For Hands And Feet

Noble & Cooley Classic SS Snare Drums



Since 1854, Noble & Cooley has been in the business of making drums. The company is now manufacturing snare drums and drumkits, using the same hand craftsmanship. Noble & Cooley's *Classic SS* snare drums are built of select rock maple planks that are steam-bent in order to create a solid wood shell. There are no cross-plyies or laminations; the shell is one piece. Each shell is fitted with inner maple reinforcement hoops. After steam-bending, the wood is left to a long drying process to stabilize the moisture content. There are 25 additional operations before the rough shell becomes the finished product.

The lugs are antique-style, using low-mass brass tubing. A 14" snare drum has ten of them, all fixed to the shell near its bottom. The company has found that this position of lug mounting (called the "nodal point") allows the shell to vibrate to its maximum capacity. The strainer is also solid brass and throws off from the center lever. It has a knurled fine-tension knob and holds the snare wire unit via string cording. This strainer is undoubtedly *the best* I've ever come across, as it is literally silent. There is no connection/release noise or slippage. It works so smoothly! (I'd love to modify my own snare drums to use this strainer!)

Chromed die-cast hoops are used, top and bottom. (The tension rods are also chrome steel.) There is no internal muffler on the drum, but the one I tested was fitted with a *Zero Ring*, which is also made by Noble & Cooley. A *Zero Ring* is merely a thin Mylar O-ring that covers the outer edge of the batter head to dampen out unwanted head overtones and ring. The concept can be experimented with by layering *Zero Rings* for different degrees of dampening. They're available for tom-toms, too, and are pretty inexpensive.

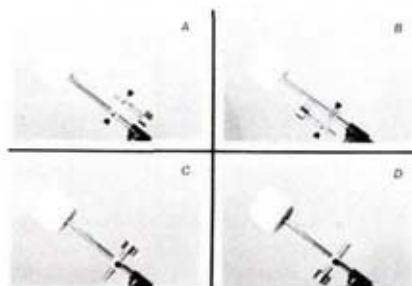
The *Classic SS* drums are available in Honey Maple or Static Black urethane finishes, as well as white or red, in 5 x 14, 7 x 14, and 8 x 14 sizes. Noble & Cooley

also has a 3 3/4 x 14 piccolo snare drum. The Honey Maple finish I saw was exquisite and totally flawless—like a quality piece of furniture. Noble & Cooley has done a truly beautiful job!

By now, you're probably asking, "How does it *sound*?!" Well, the truth is: *GREAT*. The 7 x 14 *Classic SS* I played was capable of sensitive, articulate notes at low volume, as well as having an absolute knife edge, cutting right through at loud volumes. The drum's tone is excellent for all types of playing. To be honest, I fell in love with the *Classic SS* snare. Depending on the size and finish, the snare drums range in price from \$550 to \$650. For some, the price may be a bit high, but here, it's definitely a matter of getting what you pay for: a superior drum with high quality and exceptional sound.

While at the NAMM Show this past June, I had the chance to see Noble & Cooley's new full drumkits. All tom-tom specifications are the same as for the snare drums, and the rack toms all use RIMS mounts for maximum vibration. Available sizes at present are: 8 x 10, 9 x 12, 10 x 13, and 12 x 14. A 16 x 20 bass drum featuring a ply shell is the standard bass drum with Noble & Cooley's kits. These ply shells are made to exacting specifications, featuring plies all of rock maple, with no gaps, fillers, or flaws. Larger sizes are also available. Once again, Noble & Cooley's kit drums are in a pro price range, but if you're ready for the Mercedes Benz of drumkits, you owe it to yourself to check them out!

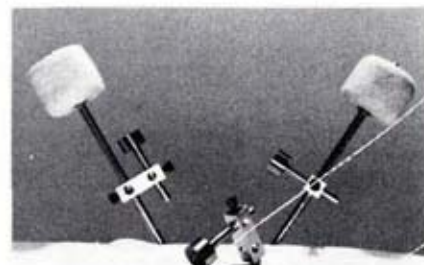
Roller Balancer



Every once in a while, I'm pleasantly surprised by a new accessory. The *Roller Balancer* is such an accessory. Bass drum pedals can really be a source of a lot of headaches when you are trying to find the optimum combination of speed, control, power, and swing. Adjusting one always seems to sacrifice the other. Roller has

found that the balance of a pedal has a great deal to do with its performance. If the weight of the beater is not in balance with the footboard and linkage, the stroke will be uneven—too heavy or too light.

The *Balancer* is a small aluminum adapter with a movable weight that adds centrifugal lift for more power without affecting speed, as well as giving back weight to the beater without affecting tension. The *Balancer* is designed to give four different balance adjustments (see photo), at least one of which, I guarantee, will help improve the action of your own beloved pedal. The weight can be placed in any direction or position to balance out the deficiencies of your pedal's response. Easy adjustment is made via a socket screw and Allen wrench, and the *Balancer* will fit any beater stem (except the new thick-post Calato).



After a bit of experimenting, I found "the spot" on my pedal for the *Balancer*, and now I won't play without it. It also helps on double bass drum or double-pedal playing, to even up the feel and response of the left pedal.

The *Balancer* retails at \$15, which is a small investment to make for a welcome difference in your bass drum playing. For more information, contact Roller at 5731 Newcastle Avenue, Encino, CA 91316.



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